



No business like it. One of this year's NCTA convention extravaganzas was the party CBS Cable threw for several thousand guests in the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History. The evening featured a number of entertainments, dancing, continuous dining and, until it ran out, enough champagne to, in the words of one delegate, "float the Queen Mary" (the docked ocean liner aboard which CBS Cable staged its first gala at the Western Cable Show last December). Hosts for the evening (at left): CBS Cable President Richard Cox; Charlotte Schiff Jones, vice president of marketing (who booked the evening's entertainment), and Robert Shay, vice president and general manager. Among the celebrities (at right): Karen Morrow and Nancy Dussault, who will star in *Singin'*; three half-hour originals to be produced by CBS Cable. The advertiser-supported cable service begins operation Oct. 12 with 12 hours of programs each day, seven days a week, via Westar III. At last count some three million cable subscribers had been committed to the cultural service. CBS announced it had signed its newest correspondent, Bill Moyers, to do a 20-part series entitled *A Walk Through the 20th Century*. It examines the places and events of the century's first 80 years and will be a part of the cable debut. CBS also announced a promotional package for affiliates making them eligible for "up to 15 cents-per-year per-subscriber in cooperative ... reimbursement funds."

offer program diversity and localism and (3) for public relations purposes—a reason she said often ends up atop the list. She also offered three basic "models" for approaching the organization of those channels: (1) through nonprofit access corporations, (2) through community institutions, such as a library, or (3) under the cable system's direct control. Buske indicated the access approach is often the most cost-efficient. "There are more people out there than you can have on staff," she said.

Jabari Simama, director of public access for Cable Atlanta, was enthusiastic about the medium's ability to "soften the market" for cable, to build subscribers and as a public and community relations vehicle. He asserted that operators can get back two to three times their investment in access through the subscription sales it encourages.

Marguerite Johnson, local origination manager of Cable TV of San Leandro, Hayward, Calif., was another who came down on the community involvement side. "They're the ones who will stick with it," she said, after the college students and other "media freaks" move on. Don

Smith, president of the NFLCP, spoke of the experience in Bloomington, Ind., where the city has made a major investment in access programming through its public library, reinvesting part of its franchise fee, while the cable operator makes a minimal investment in equipment. "The real return is in the cable system's ability to serve the community's needs," Smith said.

One of the more dramatic success stories was told by Joan Young, program director and local access coordinator for Golden Triangle Communications in Denton, Tex. From a standing start 14 months ago, when the system had only 400 subscribers, it has progressed to a point of having seven full-time staff members (plus "lots" of interns and volunteers) and being booked two months in advance on one weekly *By the People* program.

Young began the effort—in what she described as a conservative community where "all they knew about public access was New York, where they shoot dogs on Christmas Eve"—by cablecasting two live 30-minute newscasts daily for six weeks, all produced by two full-time staff members and two part-timers. After six weeks,

she said, the parent MSO—Cox Cable—took a look and doubled the budget (it's now at an annual level of \$200,000).

The key, she said is to legitimize public access (among other things, in keeping with the Denton community's conservatism, she has insisted on a dress code for student volunteers) and to program it in a noncompetitive slot (her choice: early fringe, right after work and before prime time).

Buske noted that one of the side effects of access programming is to demystify the television process, although she said many operators still are uncomfortable about putting TV equipment in the hands of the community. Asked whether there were any reliable techniques for measuring the audience size of access programming, Simama emphasized that the medium's purpose was not to seek large audiences but "a tremendous opportunity for narrowcasting to small, select communities—to see that they have a voice."

HBO goes 24 hours

Original pay service joins Movie Channel, Showtime and Cinemax in offering round-the-clock programing

Home Box Office, following the lead of Movie Channel and Showtime and its own junior service, Cinemax, plans to expand its operation to a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week schedule next Jan. 1.

HBO President James Heyworth, who made the announcement at a press conference in Los Angeles last week, in connection with the NCTA convention, admitted competitive pressures contributed to the decision, even though HBO is a dominant force in the pay programming business.

"Our hand was forced by Movie Channel, Showtime and Cinemax," he said. Movie Channel is already full time, and Showtime will expand to 24 hours next month. Cinemax, introduced at the NCTA convention a year ago, has been 24 hours a day since Jan. 1.

But Michael Fuchs, senior vice president for programming, said that HBO would be distinctive as a 24-hour service. He provided few details, except to indicate HBO would command some kind of exclusivity for its programming. "In 1982, you won't see the pay services offering the same movies," he said. "There will be exclusivity. The business is changing," he added. "We always felt we had to make HBO and Cinemax recognizable."

Fuchs also offered two other indications of the new programming service, though in negative terms. "We won't repeat movies in 24 hours," he said. And he indicated HBO would not show R-rated movies in the afternoon. He said HBO is troubled by the controversy surrounding the distribution of R movies during the day.

Heyworth said the expansion depends